

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The present application is entitled to a priority date of December 4, 2000. This is established by the verified translation of our Japanese priority application No. 2000-368539, filed that day.

By contrast, the TAGO et al. references, whether domestic or Japanese, have a reference date subsequent to our priority date.

Hence, neither can be used against the present application as a reference.

There being no viable rejection for the claims, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON



Robert J. Patch, Reg. No. 17,355
745 South 23rd Street
Arlington, VA 22202
Telephone (703) 521-2297

RJP/lk